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Report of Interrogation : No. 5854 of

9 November 1945
I/O : Capt. HALLE

P/W : HILGER, Gustav
Rank : Counsellor of Embassy
Unit : Foreign Office
Captd : 19 May 1945, Salzburg.

Veracity : Believed reliable.

Report : Answers to Periodic Intelligence Questionnaire; MIS Sep-Oct 1945.

Question USSR # 2 : Has Stalin's participation in the foreign affairs lessened any by devolution to associates ?

Answer # 7 : In his report of 30 Oct 45 about the Politburo, P/W set forth how Stalin through his position as General Secretary of the Politburo became the absolute dictator of the Soviet Union and how his will was the determining factor in all fields of Russian policy.

This is particularly true of questions of foreign policy. Stalin had always manifested a vivid interest in them and managed them from behind the stage, without himself appearing before the public. He broke that habit for the first time on 23 August 1939 when he directed personally the negotiations with Ribbentrop for the non-aggression pact between Russia and Germany and when he witnessed the signing of that treaty by Ribbentrop and Molotov. From then on, his participation in important negotiations with the representatives of foreign countries became a general rule. In the fall of 1939 he participated in the negotiations with Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia concerning the conclusion of pacts of non-aggression and mutual assistance. He negotiated with Ribbentrop the Border and Friendship Treaty between Germany and Russia of 28 September 1939, and later on he took part in the discussions about the details of the trade agreement between Germany and Russia. In early April 1941 Stalin initiated the negotiations with Yugoslavia for the conclusion of a treaty of friendship. A week later he personally conducted the discussions with the Japanese foreign minister Matsuoka for the conclusion of the Treaty of Non-Aggression and neutrality of 13 April 1941.

During these negotiations, Stalin had no official position in the Soviet government. Only on 3 May 1941 did he replace Molotov as Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars of the USSR. (Molotov kept the position of head of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs). By doing so, Stalin made himself the actual head of the government. As such he met the representatives of the USA and Great Britain in the conferences at Moscow, Teheran and Potsdam.

Up to now there has been no indication that Stalin intends to take a lesser part in foreign affairs and leave them to Molotov. The course of the negotiations during the last conference of the foreign ministers and the role which Molotov played there prove exactly the contrary. The fact that Molotov was forced to retract a statement he had made 11 days before is clear evidence of Stalin's dictatorial interference.

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EXEMPTIONS Section 3(b)
(2)(A) Privacy
(2)(B) Methods/Sources
(2)(G) Foreign Relations

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The supposition which recently appeared that Stalin intends to retire from the direction of foreign affairs for reasons of health and leave these activities to his associates have not been confirmed. The reception of the Ambassador of the USA Mr. Harriman by Stalin in Sochi shows that Stalin still wishes to hold the threads of foreign policy in his own hands.

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